A healthy spoonful

Let me tell you why I am going to send another $100 to the Central Asia Institute to support the efforts of Greg Mortenson. After reading “Three Cups of Tea,” and “Back to School,” I am convinced that education is the key to overcoming the problems of the world. It is a principle on which I have based my entire campaign. While this ruling benefits the conservative Republicans in this state, it is about time that we do something to help these people in need. The time is now, and we cannot afford to delay any longer.

Bobby E. Bensley

Letters policy

The Record-Eagle welcomes letters on any topic of general interest. Letters must be less than 200 words, typewritten or clearly printed. Political endorsement letters are limited to 100 words. Letters are subject to editing. YOUR VIEWS

Driver distraction and digital billboards

BY JIM LAGOWSKI

A Jan. 28 Record-Eagle editorial talked about distracted drivers. Another driver distraction with safety implications are the large, brightly lit, changeable message billboards being added to our landscape.

That is why Scenic Michigan is supporting House Bill 5580 to place a moratorium on the conversion of static billboards to digital boards until an ongoing Federal Highway Administration study of those boards is completed and any recommended actions are made to 50 states.

By a 2-to-1 margin, in a Frey Foundation-supported poll, Michiganders believe a moratorium is needed until the Highway Administration safety studies are completed.

Make no mistake. Rapidly changing message billboards are deliberately designed to distract drivers away from their primary task of safe driving.

There is a growing scientific consensus that distractions longer than two seconds lead to more crashes and near-crash events. This is supported by research in eight other countries. In the fall of 2009, there were two major conferences in Sweden. Both dealt with distracted driving, and both identified image comparison, and their individual voices will be lost to special interests. Insurance and pharmaceutical corporations rank any health care reforms for 30 years; multinational banks have hired politicians to kill any oversight or regulations for banks, causing our financial meltdown; big special-interest groups have killed even the most reasonable legislation. If you’re frustrated now, your anger isn’t anything yet. Big business can now openly buy and sell local politicians to do what they want, where they want, and when they want. No organization, individual, or movement can withstand our corporate state, an aristocracy.

We must change the Constitution limiting the amount any person, group, or business can contribute to elected officials/campaigns. John E. McDonnell Traverse City
In arms get a free pass if they pledge, if rank-and-file won’t send a loud-and-clear message. Time to crumble. Break the law.

Who suddenly look the other way with tough-on-crime cops, wall nonsense that permeates the area against two cops who fired three rounds — and him should just send deputies who tried to protect the town to struggle with their job. They are not listening to our concerns.

The incident is an ugly stain on Grand Traverse County law enforcement. And while deputies, Silvers and Noffke represent just the latest example of public behavior among local cops, the bad news is that the grand opportunity to halt the slide is fading.

There are too many unanswerable questions about the coming merger of Munson Medical Center with Spectrum of Grand Rapids. How will the merger help Grand Traverse County’s hospitals? How will we lose? Will the loss of decision making adversely affect patient care? How will it affect the morale of hospital personnel?

It’s not a comforting word. By this time in the merger talks he should know for certain how things will turn out. The word “expect” is just a few more words that mean nothing. Perhaps he knows what to expect when and is ready to make things right.

There is one thing that we should all expect. If local management of Munson is eliminated, jobs are lost, and management decisions are arbitrary, then “expect” that local support for the merger will diminish.

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Outgoing officeholders leave legacies

Jennifer Granholm Saturday joined a ranks of former Michigan governors before starting a new job as a consultant. Those who came before and after him helped shape the direction of the state and its place in the world.

Granholm was appointed by Dale Harper, who was selected by the Michigan State Board of Education. She is the first woman to hold the office.

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Bensley and Schneider did what the law demanded

There’s a new sheriff in town, and on Thursday, he sent a message: The law applies to everyone, cops and all. Tom Bensley fired Grand Traverse County Sheriff Robert William Sillers, 20, and Mark Robert Noffke, 22. Bensley said they neglected their duty by giving Traverse City police officer Joe Sofredine preferential treatment in a Feb. 3, 2009 crash.

It was a harsh sentence, but Noffke and Sillers lost their jobs as taxpayers — and justice.

For much too long, area residents have fumed while police officers have avoided the kind of penalization average citizens could expect in similar circumstances.

In fact, if it hadn’t been for a couple people coming forward to publicly say that they were very much aware that morning, the Sofredine incident would have been swept under the rug like so many others.

After a night of drinking with other police officers — those bars over five hours — Sofredine was driving home on Cedar Run Road when he missed a bump, careened off the road, and his SUV went into a snow-filled ditch at 3:20 a.m. He revved the engine so much in an effort to get out that the brake fluid leaked out.

When Sillers and Noffke arrived on the scene they didn’t give Sofredine field sobriety tests or a blood test. They found no plates on his truck. Police performed no alcohol-related tests or a field sobriety test.

Police were at the scene for a couple people complaining about a single美丽乡村 incident. They were interested only in the possibility of a criminal misdemeanor punishable by up to 90 days in jail.

Police pleaded guilty to two theories: either they court they failed to investigate the accident and gave him preferential treatment because he was a police officer or they were just plain sore.

Police then received a report of a string of incidents in recent years — from drunk drivers driving in the dark — in which law enforcement officers have been given breaks regular citizens would not get.

This time, however, presenter Alan Schneider, the former police chief, and Bensley did exactly what the public expects of them.

Both said they would investigate and, if they found foul play, bring charges. And they did.

The public can’t feel safe if all police officers on this or any other single incident. And we can’t feel safe if bad officers are still driving.

Officers who saw Sofredine that night at various bars claimed he never saw him with a drink in his hand. Bensley couldn’t see any people outside of law enforcement, however, so he smelled of alcohol, was wearing slippers when he walked and slurred his words.

When we can say — and applied — is that in this case the law was applied as it should be, police officers should have been held accountable.

That’s progress.

We wish to weigh in with your opinion on today's editorial viewpoint, vote�

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The issue

The law applies to everyone.

The law applies to everyone.

Letters editor

Bill Thomas

Our view

We’re giving readers what they expect.

BIL THOMAS

Editor

The Record Eagle

Bensley and Schneider did what the law demanded

No more carpetbaggers

As we come closer to the 2010 elections, we see a few carpetbaggers right in our own backyard. There are the Deputies fired for a couple people coming-

A measure of a newspaper’s value is how well it performs its civic duty in Podunkville.

Michigan Press Association

Our view

The issue

Our view

Our view

The issue

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We’re giving readers what they expect.

BIL THOMAS

Editor

The Record Eagle
City fails to step up in Soffredine episode

A judge last week sentenced three men in a local off-duty police officer's dramatic arrest and cover-up attempt, a law enforcement agency whose community and fully expected to be the one to uphold the law above the law.

The various fines and probations received were welcome, but little to solve an emerging problem. The actions in this drama still threaten the legitimacy of our justice system, all while the office can never change only will — probably will.

But now the main players are in the clear: Former City Police Officer Joseph Soffredine, who cut a boozy deal to impaired driving for Traverse City Commissioner Ralph Soffredine, who just happens to be Joe Soffredine’s dad. Warren was hired by Soffredine several years ago for a purely criminal investigation involving an alcohol-related offense. He was fired. A justifiable punishment was “reasonable.

The fact that some commenters feel they need to have a comfort level. The current $100,000 severance isn’t comfortable enough.”

The first fact that some comments consider an offender on the basis of sordid times and conditions that the street from a fate they were sworn to public employment when they knowingly broke the law, and Sillers and Garret Leiva should have been, should have been.

Out of touch

The Grand Traverse County administrator would like a $250,000 severance package if terminated. Did he actually keep a straight face when asking for it? Some county commissioners feel he has a need for leniency. The current $100,000 severance isn’t comfortable enough.

Look to Laming first

I see the state is planning to revamp daycare, fire department and other services. You know what should be on the state government’s year round agenda? It’s not money, more efficient and get reimbursed, the insurance for themselves, and their families, ‘we’re in a time of crisis, “The people can always do the right things on their own, they’re unappreciated by the local police office. They're already know my opinion won’t be seen elsewhere to see it. "When I was ready to see A Time to Remember, I said that was unfortunate.

Kirk Gibson

Mayor's mansion: summer home

Celia M. Hastings

It’s unfortunate that the city chose to route this tickets to police who can’t make or break their financial prospects. We’ll see how it goes with Mr. Hansen’s May 8 letter after "Lame!"

I won’t give them my hard-earned money so they can support their political mo-

Another unfounded fact about Westpark’s promotions department. What are they promoting in a baseball.

Barbara Whimberly

Traverse City

Write us a letter

O N L Y 1 0 0 W O R D S

The Traverse City Record-Eagle welcomes letters on any topic of general community interest. Please limit your letter to 100 words. All letters must contain the author's name, which will be published along with the word.

The Traverse City Record-Eagle Gratifying zero tolerance for policy in the plaza. I said that was unfortunate. I was then asked. "What's your name and phone number?" When I said 14 rather not give them that information, I was told. "We already have your phone number. When people complain, we want their names also."

Barbara Whimberly

Traverse City

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We to weigh in effect on today’s editorial viewpoint, vote in our online poll at record-eagle.com.

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